

In re Patent Application of:

DE LAENDER ET AL.

Serial No. **10/660,067**

Confirmation No. **6186**

Filed: **September 11, 2003**

In the Specification:

Please replace paragraph [0004] beginning at page 2, with the following rewritten paragraph:

The support blocks may be formed from a composite material. In at least one embodiment, the composite material may be a combination of a cellulous ~~cellular~~ material and at least one thermoplastic resin. The cellulous ~~cellular~~ material may be, but is not limited to, a wood species, linen flax shives, bagasse from sugar cane, jute, and bamboo. The thermoplastic resin may be a polypropylene, a polyethylene, or other appropriate thermoplastic resin, or any combination thereof. The composite material may provide increased strength to the support blocks in comparison with support blocks formed from 100 percent wood. The composite material may provide increased wear resistance and, therefore, increased lifespan. The composite material is superior to an all plastic material in that the composite material is nailable, easily machinable, easier to paint, and lighter.

Please replace paragraph [0027] beginning at page 7, with the following rewritten paragraph:

The support block 16 may be formed from a composite material. In at least one embodiment, the composite material may be formed from at least one species of a cellulous ~~cellular~~ material and a thermoplastic resin, or a combination of a

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cellulous ~~cellular~~ material and a thermosetting resin, or any combination thereof. The cellulous ~~cellular~~ material may be, but is not limited to, a wood species, linen flax shives, bagasse from sugar cane, jute, rice husks, paper fiber, recycled paper, nut shells, cornhusks, other agricultural products, and bamboo. The composite material may have better impact strength and higher nail retention than wood. In particular, the composite material may have a fork tine compression strength that is about 2.5 times greater the fork tine compression strength of a wooden block made of standard southern yellow pine. For instance, the tine compression strength of the composite material may be about 4,225 pounds at 23 degrees Celsius per composite block having dimensions of about 4.61 inches long, 3.77 inches wide, and 3.51 inches high. In addition, the nail retention strength may be about 50 percent better than the nail retention strength of standard southern yellow pine. The composite material may also be generally water resistant such that the composite material may not absorb more than five percent water by weight and has less than two percent enlargement in any direction when submerged in water at 20 degrees Celsius for 24 hours. In addition, in at least one embodiment, the composite material does not distort when placed in water at 100 degrees Celsius for one hour.

Please replace paragraph [0029] beginning at page 8, with the following rewritten paragraph:

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The cellulose ~~cellular~~ material may also be formed from particles having diameters between about 0.05 mm and about 4 mm, preferably between 0.1 mm and 1 mm, and most preferably between about 0.177 mm to about 0.42 mm. The cellulose ~~cellular~~ material may be formed from wood particles having different diameters. Wood particles of these sizes can provide increased durability of the support block 16.

Please replace paragraph [0031] beginning at page 9, with the following rewritten paragraph:

The polypropylene may be formed from a homopolymer or a copolymer having a density between about 0.80 grams per cubic centimeter and about 0.99 grams per cubic centimeter, although the invention is not limited to resins having densities in this range. The thermosetting resin may be, but is not limited to, a polyester, an epoxy, or vinyl ester. Support blocks 16 formed from the composite material are capable of withstanding repeated blows from lifting members 18.